The Fisherman's Husband

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The Fisherman's Husband

by Anna_Jay

Summary

Will saves a sea lion from a net.
The sea lion decides to thank him.
Will is very confused.

Will expected many things when he heard Winston barking wildly down at the beach. Seagulls, a cat, the waves, a rock. The list was endless. What Will wasn't expecting to find was a sea lion trapped in a fishing net. A very large and *very* angry sea lion.

Will gaped at it before reigning in Winston. He put the dog inside before grabbing his tools and wondering how he was going to free the sea lion without getting bitten for his troubles.

He found the sea lion here he left it: wrapped tightly in the net and growling as it thrashed about.

"Stop that. You're only making it worse." Will scolded.

As he expected, the creature continued to thrash and entrap itself more and more. Will knew his best bet would be to wait until the sea lion wore itself out. Maybe then he could try and clip some of the netting away without fear of losing his arm.

The sea lion gave one last attempt before flopping down onto the sandy beach with a loud huff. Will waited moments longer before he braved approaching. He knelt down to get a closer look at the situation. The sea lion was watching him, its black almost red eyes following his every move. It was unnerving to say the least.

"I'm not going to hurt you," Will tried to console. He kept his voice low and avoided making eye contact. "I'm going to cut away some of the netting. Try not to move."

He knew it was foolish. Trying to reason with the sea lion. Still, it helped him concentrate as he cautiously grabbed the netting near its flipper and cut away.

The sea lion flinched, and Will jumped away expecting it to struggle and flail. The sea lion remained still. Will blinked in astonishment before risking looking at the creature. The sea lion was still watching him, but it seemed more relaxed than it had before.

"That was… unexpected." Will admitted out loud. He grabbed more of the netting and cut away. He did this slowly at first, but when it became apparent the sea lion was going to remain still, he cut a little faster.

In no time at all Will had the sea lion freed. He moved away as the sea lion got up and out of the remainder of the net. It shook itself and waddled toward the ocean. Will sighed in relief. He hadn't seen blood or any cuts while he worked away at the net. He waited until the sea lion was back in the water before picking up the scraps of the net and headed back home.

Will's days continued as normal after that. He would work on his boat and then take Winston out and go fishing. He liked fishing. He got to be alone with his dog out on the ocean or in a small secluded beach somewhere. No one around to bother him. He usually caught a few fish he could make last for a few weeks. This way he wouldn't have to go the store unless he absolutely had to for dog food or produce or liquor. No going out meant he didn't have to make small talk with others.

As his days passed in peace, he couldn't help but feel… off. Like, he was being watched. He dismissed it as anxiety. It had been much better lately, but there were still flare ups from time to time. Will sighed and relaxed in his boat and placed a hand on Winston's head as he enjoyed the sun shine.

The sea lion was back.

It had given Will quite the shock when he was working on his boat and the beast jumped onto the dock next to him. Winston was definitely not pleased as he barked from his safe spot in the boat. The sea lion snorted and shook its head, spraying everywhere and approached Will. Will backed away as the sea lion grew nearer.

"Hey, buddy, you're a little—"

The sea lion lowered its head and dropped a fish Will hadn't noticed it was carrying into his lap. It was still alive, so once it was released it flopped about in Will's lap, startling Will even more. He inadvertently smacked it out of his lap and back into the water. The sea lion looked over the edge where the fish had disappeared, and Will could swear the sea lion looked displeased. It stared after the fish for longer than Will thought necessary before snorting and diving back into the water leaving a still barking Winston and a very confused Will behind.

Will returned home exhausted and craving a fix of alcohol. He was retired, but he was still called away to look at homicides whenever there was a killer no one could catch. He tried to leave that all behind him for his own sanity, but it seemed his past refused to let him go.

He sighed as he meandered into the kitchen. He opened the fridge when he realized Winston had yet to greet.

Worried, Will searched the house until he found his furry companion in the bedroom. He was looking out the window, transfixed.

Will sighed. He dragged a hand over his face. His worried searching and images of what he might find draining him even more. He approached Winston and stroked a hand down the dog's head. Winston acknowledged him but continued to look out the window. Curious, Will looked out to see what the dog was looking at. He was only mildly surprised to see the sea lion back on his dock. What he was more surprised to see was an array of dead fish in front of it.

"What the…"

Against his best judgement, Will went out to see what the sea lion was up to.

The sea lion perked up when it saw Will. It looked down at its bounty of fish before looking back up at Will. Will saw there were many different kinds of fish. Some were bright blue,

others a deep crimson, and some multicolored. After a long pause the sea lion nudged a few closer to Will, and Will thought the creature looked proud.

“Um. That’s a fine array of fish you’ve got there…”

The sea lion barked and continued to nudge the fish toward Will. When Will didn’t reach for any of the fish, the sea lion gingerly picked up the bluest fish. Will stumbled back as the sea lion dropped the fish at Will’s feet. It looked up expectantly at him, tilting its head one way and then the other.

“Um, thank you,” Will said since he couldn’t think of anything else to say. “That’s very kind of you, but I can’t accept this.”

The sea lion narrowed its eyes, and Will wondered for a horrible moment if the sea lion could understand him.

He continued on, regardless, “I mean. You worked hard to catch it. I can’t take that from you?”

The sea lion looked unimpressed by his reasoning. It picked up the fish again, and again dropped it by Will’s feet. Will had a sudden sense that declining again would not be wise. He picked up the fish and thanked the sea lion. The sea lion barked happily and went back to the piles of fish. Will hoped it wouldn’t insist on making him take all of the fish, but the sea lion seemed satisfied that Will accepted at least one. It began to eat the fish it brought, and while it was distracted, Will made his getaway.

Back in the safety of his home, Will eyed the fish in his hands. He couldn’t eat the fish. Who knows how long it had been dead and in the sun. It didn’t smell rotten or bad, just like a regular fish. Still, Will couldn’t chance it.

But… to throw it out was a waste. A waste of food, time and effort on the sea lion’s part to catch it, and a waste to the poor dead fish. Will sighed. What’s the worst that could happen? He gets sick and can’t come to look at images of dead bodies anymore. That wouldn’t be too bad now that he thought about it.

In the end, Will ate the fish.

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